

SENATE BILL 7020

By Kyle

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,
relative to cooperative education.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 7, Part 1, is amended by adding the following language as a new, appropriately designated section:

§ 49-7-1__.

(a) The Tennessee higher education commission shall develop, implement and administer a cooperative education program to be known as the "Tennessee cooperative education program".

(b) The purpose of the program shall be to provide students in public postsecondary education, including students enrolled in four-year and two-year institutions and technology centers, enhanced higher educational experiences by combining academic study in degree, certificate or diploma programs offered by institutions in the Tennessee board of regents or the University of Tennessee systems with relevant on-the-job training in their chosen fields of study.

(c) As used in this section, "cooperative education program" means a partnership between students, public postsecondary institutions and employers that formally integrates students' academic study with meaningful work for cooperating employers that is germane to the students' fields of study and future careers.

(d) The Tennessee cooperative education program shall offer:

(1) Alternating cooperative education, in which students who are enrolled full-time in public institutions of higher education may alternate employment in a career-related field with academic study;

(2) Parallel cooperative education, in which students who are enrolled full-time in public institutions of higher education may be employed a maximum of twenty (20) hours in a career-related work experience; and

(3) Summer cooperative education, in which students who are enrolled full-time in public institutions of higher education may be employed in a career-related work experience during the summer months.

(e) The program shall:

(1) Include employers in significant programmatic roles in addition to supervision and evaluation of student employees;

(2) Evaluate each participating student's performance in the cooperative position, both from the perspective of the student's postsecondary institution and the student's cooperating employer;

(3) Provide a matriculating student with compensation from the cooperating employer in the form of wages or salaries for work performed;

(4) Provide a matriculating student with academic credit upon successful completion of the students' cooperative employment; provided, that the student has paid all required tuition and fees to the student's postsecondary institution for the receipt of credit for the cooperative employment; and

(5) Encourage cooperating employers to offer graduates of the program permanent jobs.

(f) The commission shall establish procedures to identify employment opportunities for cooperative education throughout the state in private, governmental and nonprofit sectors and shall work with public postsecondary institutions to encourage student involvement in the cooperative education program.

(g) The commission is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations to effectuate the purposes of this act. All such rules and regulations shall be promulgated in accordance with Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4, Chapter 5.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.